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ABSTRACT

The first of five articles contained in these public relations accreditation proceedings is a guide for institutions entitled "Accreditation May or May Not Be For You: A Review of Accreditation in Public Relations" (Bonita Dostal Neff). Appended to this article are: International Communication Association's (ICA's) Public Relations Interest Group (PRIG) internal survey on accreditation; a PRIG-ICA Petition to the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC); a schedule of Speech Communication Association forums; and a list of organizations involved in public relations accreditation. The remaining four articles in this document are: (1) "Accreditation and Certification" (William Brody); (2) "Accreditation Program of the Florida Public Relations Association" (Gregg Phifer); (3) "It's as Easy as ABC" (Beth West); and (4) "PRSA and APR: The Professional Connection" (Carol Ann Hall), an article concerning the Public Relations Society of America's procedures for accrediting public relations professionals. (SR)

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Public Relations Accreditation

-Proceedings-

Edited by
Bonita Dostal Neff, Ph.D.

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Commission on Public Relations
Speech Communication Association
November, 1989 - San Francisco

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ACCREDITATION MAY OR MAY NOT BE FOR YOU: A REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Bonita Dostal Neff, Ph.d.
Chair, Commission on Public Relations
Speech Communication Association
Chair, Task Force on Accreditation
International Communication Association
Member, Professional Development Committee
Women in Communication, Inc.
President, Public Communication Associates, Munster, In

You may not be thinking about accreditation either as a professional or as a faculty member in charge of a public relations program. Or on the other hand, you may be noting accreditation, broadly defined here to include certification, is a requirement for seeking certain funding resources and a strong asset to the professional when pursuing promotion or employment.

Whatever your perspective on accreditation, these PROCEEDINGS guide you through the current developments in program accreditation (especially for the communication academic) and provide a guide to available accreditation programs for the professional.

PROGRAM ACCREDITATION--AN EMERGING POSSIBILITY

Only journalism and mass communication are accredited under the one national sanctioned accrediting body--the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). You may ask: Why discuss program accreditation if communication departments are excluded by definition? It is true accreditation is not presently possible under the sole federally designated accrediting council--ACEJMC. Present efforts to seek accreditation recognition by public relations interest groups in the International Communication Association (ICA) and the Speech Communication Association (SCA) deserve some attention, however. Plus alternatives to ACEJMC program accreditation are discussed if accreditation is not extended to communication professionals.

COMMUNICATION PROFESSIONALS ASSESS INTEREST IN ACCREDITATION

The first internal survey of communication professionals in 1987 on program accreditation indicated a large percentage of the respondents were "not sure" about applying for certification under ACEJMC (a moot point since accreditation is not allowed for communication departments) or were not sure about having a new certification procedure established for programs. The responses strongly supported the need for further study on accreditation. The sample reflected approximately 60 per cent of the colleges and universities with at least one faculty member holding PRIG membership in the International Communication Association (ICA). See Appendix One for survey and list of advantages and disadvantages of accreditation.

TASK FORCE PROPOSAL VOTED DOWN ON NEW PROGRAM PRIG/ICA, MONTREAL 1987

In May of 1987 a Task Force on Accreditation was established by the Public Relations Interest Group (PRIG) in ICA. The task force chair, without benefit of committee input, proposed setting up an accreditation system through PRIG. The proposal was tabled indefinitely at the ICA business meeting in Montreal. A new task force was formed to redirect efforts toward assessing the membership interest and needs regarding accreditation.

TASK FORCE PROPOSAL ASKS FOR INVESTIGATION OF ACEJMC. PRIG/ICA, NEW ORLEANS 1988

At the 1988 annual meeting in New Orleans, a second membership survey on accreditation revealed little awareness about the process. These PROCEEDINGS respond to the needs and concerns expressed by ICA-PRIG membership survey. This is your guide to the existing accreditation programs available to communication professionals and establishes the ongoing effort to more fully address the issue of access to program accreditation services for communication departments.

During PRIG-ICA business meeting, the members supported a recommendation to send a letter of protest to the U.S. Department of Education's Accreditation Division. The letter stated there was a lack of representation for public relations on the national accrediting council of ACEJMC. The U. S. Department investigated and determined a representative for public relations was on the Council. However, DOE recommended that a petition be submitted to ACEJMC requesting communication departments be allowed to apply for accreditation.

TASK FORCE PROPOSAL PETITIONS ACEJMC TO ACCREDIT COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENTS PRIG/ICA, SAN FRANCISCO 1989

At the 1989 annual PRIG-ICA business meeting in San Francisco, the task force proposal to petition ACEJMC for accrediting communication departments in the accreditation process was passed. In July of 1989 the ACEJMC Council was sent the PRIG petition for consideration at their upcoming meetings during 1989-90. Presently PRIG is awaiting ACEJMC's response to the petition. Further action is dependent on the Council's response to the petition. See Appendix II for copies of petition.

IS PROGRAM ACCREDITATION POSSIBLE?

Program accreditation may or may not be for your institution. For some institutions financial or administrative reasons pressure colleges or universities to seek accreditation in areas which offer this recognition. As mentioned, PRIG-ICA has petitioned ACEJMC to open program accreditation to communication departments. Meanwhile, in response to the exclusion of communication programs from accreditation, PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) is offering an option called program certification. Although available to communication programs, there are restrictions and the next article more fully describes these constraints.

The U.S. Department of Education Accreditation Division allows only one designated group to accredit programs. Therefore, the PRSA program is called a "certification" program to avoid conflict. How these two programs will be viewed or allowed to co-exist by DOE has not been resolved. Some professionals question whether a nonacademic public relations group should be involved in program accreditation of colleges and universities. Many academic professionals are awaiting the results of the PRIG-ICA petition to open accreditation to communication professionals. If the petition fails, further action may be taken on the federal level with SCA and ICA playing major roles in developing a program accreditation process.

MEET THE KEY PLAYERS IN ACCREDITATION

SCA's Commission on Public Relations sponsored two national forums on accreditation. Each forum, described below, introduced key organizations and issues on accreditation. Note a list of the forum participants is found in Appendix III.

SCA/CPR FORUM--NEW ORLEANS, 1988

The first CPR-SCA forum focused on several major efforts in public relations accreditation, including the activities of the Accrediting Council for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). ACEJMC as the sole accrediting agency for public relations programs, was represented by John Lavine, President. Lavine indicated during the forum that communication departments are not accredited and he did not see the Council allowing communication departments to be audited in the future.

Two national research projects were integrated into the presentation. Bonita Dostal Neff reviewed her survey of public relations courses found in university and college catalogs. Margaret Fitch-Hauser highlighted her national survey of respondents to a questionnaire on public relations programs. Conclusions from these national studies indicated communication departments led in the number of public relations courses offered and communication public relation programs had more full-time professors with doctorates than those in journalism or mass communication.

William Ehling, co-author of the 1987 Commission study on the Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education, outlined the ideal curriculum in public relations. Neff noted that communication departments most closely fit the ideal curriculum when comparing courses found in business, mass communication, and journalism departments.

SCA/CPR FORUM--SAN FRANCISCO 1989

The second forum is summarized in these proceedings. The goals here are 1) to outline the actions being taken to assure communication professionals will have full access to the accreditation process, and 2) to provide resources on individual accreditation programs.

INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION

Representatives from the accreditation and/or certification programs for public relations professionals offer a summary of services available in these PROCEEDINGS and include the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and Florida's's statewide accreditation program for professionals. Note a listing of organizations involved in accreditation, regardless of specific program offered, is found in Appendix IV.

FINAL COMMENTS

As a professional, these PROCEEDINGS should assist you in deciding about the role of accreditation in your academic and professional life. If you do not find immediate answers, the materials will assist you in shaping your questions and directing your questions to the organization which can best respond.

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APPENDIX I - Survey

REPORT OF MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

ISSUES IN PROGRAM ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

This paper reports the results of the Public Relations Interest Group's internal survey regarding program accreditation and possible action by the interest group. Due to the time constraints of the project no cross-tabulations were conducted on the data. It is possible that a more elaborate statistical analysis could be conducted if the PRIG membership indicated an interest in such a report.

The report summarizes the total responses for each item. A copy of the open-ended responses are also included. A total of 30 completed surveys were received. This represents approximately 50 to 60 percent of the colleges and universities which have at least one faculty member holding PRIG membership.

Q1. Is your PR program certified by AEJ-MC?

Yes: 30.0% No: 70.0%

Q2. IF NO: Have you ever attempted to have your PR program certified?

Yes: 00.0% No: 100.0%

Q3. Are you planning to apply for AEJ-MC certification in the future?

Yes: 30.0% No: 30.0% Not sure: 40.0%

Q4. Would you be interested in having some sort of certification procedure established by our interest group?

Yes: 20.0% No: 30.0% Not sure: 50.0%

Q5. Would you attempt to have your program certified by AEJ-MC, if your program qualified?

Yes: 30.0% No: 13.3% Not sure: 40.0% NA: 16.7%

Q6. Would you support a certification procedure that used the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education's guidelines as certification standards?

Yes: 43.3% No: 16.6% Not sure: 36.7%

Q8. Would you be interested in any/or all of the following plans?

Q8.1 PRIG should approach AEJ-MC to work toward including PR programs currently not eligible for certification in their certification procedures.

Yes: 62.1% No: 17.2% Not sure: 20.7%

Q8.2 PRIG should explore the establishment of its own certification procedures.

Yes: 34.5% No: 17.2% Not sure: 48.3%

Q8.3 PRIG should approach the SCA PR interest group to explore certification of non-journalism PR programs.

Yes: 48.3% No: 20.7% Not sure: 31.0%

Q8.4 PRIG should undertake a study to determine what advantages, if any, there are to having a PR program certified.

Yes: 82.1% No: 7.1% Not sure: 10.8%

Would you be willing to serve on such a commission?

Yes: 57.1% No: 28.6% Not sure: 14.3%

Pete Hamilton
Kansas State University
Paper presented at Central States Speech Association
St. Louis--1987

ADVANTAGES

Attracts students.

Provides program credibility.

Makes standards uniform across universities.

Educate them to needed curricular changes.

Help secure more faculty positions.

Help secure more financial support for program.

Increase student's confidence in their major.

Recognition, accountability, standardization.

Has credibility and established reputation.

Recognizes value of liberal arts.

Allows justification for program development on departmental level.

Students sense more professionalism.

Create distinctions--certified and not certified (e.g. employment, continuing education)

Enhance student internship possibilities.

Enhance recruitment of students.

Enhance chance for getting additional funding to support program expansion.

Index of quality for programs. This may be especially useful in cases where programs are under review by state agencies, as "objective" measures like certification are often valued.

Aid in student recruitment. "Good" students may be drawn to programs which are certified.

Mark of professionalism. Certification may help insure high standards for programs and demonstrate that programs are of "professional" caliber.

Improvement in facilities.

Improvement in salaries.

Improvement in student-teacher ratio.

Credibility to us as educators and gives us greater strength with our respective professional groups.

Provides some guidelines for program planning.

Aids in promoting program.

Prestige with colleagues (both in and out of PR--particularly non-PR colleagues in our department and in our college) Communication and Fine Arts.

Benefits to our students in resultant self-respect and recruitment.

Could give students edge in the work place.

Could help PRSSA chapters--a decided benefit.

It might help sell administration on the need for resources to develop additional causework.

Helps program attain credibility in the academic organization of which it is a part.

Improves quality of program through input of certification team (process produces insights, suggestions)

Contributes external impetus and encouragement for improvement and change.

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DISADVANTAGES

Takes large amount of time to prepare for; faculty are already overloaded with ... responsibilities.

Subjects our program to a national "norm" that may not adequately recognize the particular mission of our institution and clientele.

Overstates and overweights the significance of an external team or group that only touches the surface in a short period of time.

Participation would unnecessarily compound work load.

Dual programs conceivably would depreciate the value of both.

Certification would be duplicative of AEJMC.

Certification would require programs with limited faculty to teach 2 versions of very similar courses in some cases.

We attract plenty of majors without certification, so the extra effort required wouldn't generate additional students or faculty here.

Expense.

Under current JCEJMC standards, accreditation is actually perceived by many to mean your program is not of high quality since standards are so out of date.

Red tape with no pay-off to students or school.

Locked in to courses not necessary for curriculum.

Lack of support from our administration for use of my time.

Little practical meaning. In a field like PR, where most practitioners are <u>not</u> members of any common professional organization (IABC, PRSA, etc.), and where practitioners come from a variety of backgrounds, certification may pull little weight in the hiring or career potential of program graduates.

Discriminatory standards. Inevitably, certification will separate programs into "haves" and "have nots". If certification standards are not carefully drawn, some programs may be "penalized" unfairly.

Cost of administration. Certifying programs will take time and effort, and it will involve some expense. Who will pay?

Attract high quality faculty if/when program expands.

Retain students in program, prevent transfers to other schools.

Improve quality of curriculum and/or undergraduate instruction.

Restricts what we can do in program.

Paperwork/bureaucracy both increase.

We may become less responsive to community/student needs because we fear losing accredidation.

Restrictive offerings.

Lack of creativity and change.

Staffing distractions.

It does not assure a good program.

It does not increase employability.

It slows down innovation by the entanglements of bureaucracy.

It does not assure that the reviewers will be competent to review, evaluate, and certify.

ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE
1989--Progress Report

Bonita Dostal Neff, Chair

Project Update.

ACEJMC ACCREDITATION--As directed by the ICA-PRIG membership, as chair of the Accreditation Task Force a letter indicating PRIG's concerns about accreditation of public relations was sent to the U.S. Department of Education's Accreditation Division. The letter addressed ACEJMC's failure to provide public relations representation on the Accrediting Committee.

The U.S. Department of Education investigated this issue and concluded that there is representation for public relations on the Council. After a lengthy telephone conversation with John Lavine, head of ACEJMC, it is clear that public relations does have representation and I was directed further to the Council's public relations representative Professor Carol Reuss from the University of North Carolina. Professor Reuss affirmed that public relations was represented on the Council. She also discussed the PRSA "Certification" plan which was approved by the PRSA Educational Affairs Committee at the annual meeting in Cincinnati, Fall 1988. However, from the various discussions, perhaps Betsy Plank's complaint should be restated. Plank may be really talking about how public relations is represented. The rationale for the PRSA certification program, for example, stresses that because of 'unit' accreditation specific programs are not accredited but are carried along in the accreditation of a larger program. (Source: The CEPR Program of PRSA)

As chair of the Accreditation Task Force, I travelled to Washington D.C. in October, 1988 and held two conferences with the U.S. Department of Education Accreditation Division and consulted with COPA. Several issues have been developed more fully as a result of my inquiry and include:

Issue: How Public Relations is represented in the accreditation process.

Clearly the "journalism" model being supported by ACEJMC's accreditation does not require a specific number of courses. Whereas, specific courses are proposed by the 1987 Commission on the Design of an Undergraduate Public Relations Program. Plank, as co-chair of the commission, is establishing a more ideal public relations curriculum model, a model ICA-PRIG has endorsed.

Issue: The fact that communication departments are excluded from ACEJMC accreditation.

John Lavine stated that communication departments are excluded by definition from ACEJMC accreditation. Lavine further stated that evidence indicating communication departments compliance with accrediting guidelines would not change the exclusionary policy. (Speech Communication Forum on Accreditation, New Orleans, November 1988)

Result: The U.S. Department of Education interpreted our letter to be a legitimate basis for requesting communication departments to be considered for accreditation. Pending the results of this request, the next step will be designed on the outcome of ACEJMC's response. The arguments put forth include:

a. Is it legal to exclude a class of public relations professionals simply because of who they are, regardless of qualification?

b. Is it possible to deprive a group of accreditation when monies are attached to accreditation recognition?

c. Is it possible to eliminate a group which may qualify, if not exceed the expectations for accreditation?

Enclosed is the ICA-PRIG 1987-88 survey on the membership's awareness of accreditation. The above background report is a response to the need for information expressed by the membership.

Committee:
Bonita Dostal Neff, Chair,
Shirley Willihnganz, Barbara Norman.

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR 1988-89
Bonita Dostal Neff
Public Relations Officer

NETWORKING FOR PRIG.--Presently 75 professional practitioners are considering membership in PRIG (this would bring us close to division status). International contacts have been made with the Dublin, Ireland's program planning group. Joint panels Have been discussed as a possibility, including membership in PRIG. Our international membership should dramatically increase as the committed public relations scholars and practitioners respond to the invitation to participate in the 1990 Ireland convention. The professionals expressing interest in membership come from Austria, Australia, Germany, Ireland, Great Britain, and the Netherlands.

PRIG's activities have been promoted to a 1,000 Central States Communication Association members, 109 SCA-Commission on Public Relations members, Illinois's state speech-communication newsletter, the state journal editors, and selected public relations professionals from Women in Communication, Inc. Account executives handling international accounts have been recruited for membership in PRIG. These professionals should add an interesting dimension to our group.

Ireland's Convention
Deserves Advance Notice!

Ireland is an important convention to promote for our membership. Some comments during the year highlighted a few obstacles PRIG has created and would be very simple to change. One member stressed, for example, that she could not come unless she was on a program. This could be as chair or possibly a respondent. Another member indicated funding would not be available unless he had a specific role in the public relations program.

Suggestions: Assign chair and respondent responsibilities to people who are not presenting. Perhaps at the business meeting there could be an opportunity to sign up for Dublin as a chair or respondent. Coordinate assignments earlier by having, for example, the newsletter published before the call for papers. A request for volunteers interested in chairing or responding to a session would help to encourage convention attendance for our own membership.

Also being a reader is great preparation for officer work. Readers become familiar with the expectations for program review and become acquainted with the criteria used for evaluating research papers and panel proposals.

Results Of Task Force Survey

A survey of ICA PRIG members was conducted to determine their awareness of, and concerns about, issues related to accreditation. The survey was included in a 1988 issue of the newsletter, and was distributed at the PRIG business meeting in New Orleans (May, 1988). Thirteen surveys were completed. Responses are detailed below.

Question 1. Should ICA PRIG address the issue of educational standards in a session of the next convention?

Yes	No	Maybe	Total
8	4	1	13

Question 2. Does ACEJMC's accreditation process for public relations reflect the concerns found in departments other than journalism/mass communication (i.e., speech communicaiton, business)?

Yes	No	Maybe	Don't Know	No answer	Total
3	5	3	1	1	13

The three people who answered "maybe" elaborated on their answers. One indicated he/she didn't know how the accreditation process was conducted, but thought the process might be a concern depending on whether ACEJMC accredits departments or sequences. The second noted that the application of the "75%-25%" rule to programs in Arts and Sciences was sometimes problematic, and the third suggested that AEJMC was run by too many "green-eye-shaded news-ed types."

The person who responded "don't know" indicated a need for more information about the accreditation process.

Question 3. Should ICA PRIG endorse the concept of accreditation (or sanction) by some organization as an alternative to ACEJMC?

Yes	No	No Answer	Don't Know	Total
5	6	1	1	13

Question 3a. If yes, should this priority be considered high or low?

High	Low	No Answer	Total
2	2	1	5

Question 3b. What organization(s) would you suggest as appropriate to sanction PR programs?

Two people wrote responses to this question. One indicated that PRSA should sanction, with cooperation from ICA, SCA and AEJMC. Another suggested that the program be conducted by a joint ICA/SCA group.

Overall, we concluded two things from this survey. First, given the low response rate, we wondered if people were a) not concerned about accreditation issues or b) did not know enough about the issues to even begin to answer the survey. Second, those who completed the survey felt that the issue of educational standards was an important one but expressed very little agreement about how well ACEJMC's accreditation process served PR needs or what PRIG should be doing next. A logical response to both these concerns seems to be education of members as to what accreditation is, what is involved, who the key players are, etc. We therefore decided to submit a special report to members on accreditation issues.

APPENDIX II - Petition

ACCREDITATION TASK FORCE

July 19, 1989

Dear ACEJMC Council Representatives:

The membership of the Public Relations Interest Group for the International Communication Association requests ACEJMC to accredit public relations programs in units outside of journalism and mass communication. Two national studies (Neff and Fitch-Hauser) incorporating communication departments indicate public relations is flourishing outside of the journalism and mass communication departmental units. Besides quantity, the quality of the public relations programs outside of the defined accreditation units further suggests that accreditation is based on exclusionist principles and not solely on professional standards. Attached is the supporting evidence demonstrating the urgency for opening ACEJMC's accreditation process to public relations programs in departmental units outside of journalism and mass communication.

Sincerely,

Bonita Dostal Neff

Bonita Dostal Neff, Ph.d.
Chair--Accreditation Task Force
Public Relations Interest Group
International Communication Association
8320 Greenwood
Munster, Indiana 46321
219 838-4428

cc:
Susanne Shaw
John Lavine
Don E. Schultz
Richard Cole
David Ferguson

EVIDENCE FOR PETITION TO EXTEND ACCREDITATION TO QUALITY PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAMS REGARDLESS OF LOCATION

Public Relations Programs Extensive in Departmental Communication Units.

A review of college and university catalogs (Neff) reveals that public relations programs are more frequently offered in departmental units other than journalism and mass communication. Programs with sequences of 5 or more courses were offered most frequently in departmental units of communication. Telephone interviews with the department chairs of these sequences further indicates the pressures are great for very rapid growth in these programs.

The Neff study documented that the internship is the strongest in the communication departments, offering on the average of two internship experiences with supervised monitoring extensively mentioned. The internship is the most important course in the ideal public relations sequence set forth in the 1987 joint commission study by AEJMC and PRSA. And, most importantly, the internship is one of the standards required for accreditation.

The Fitch-Hauser study documents additionally that communication departmental units have more full-time public relations faculty with doctorates than the faculty in the units of journalism and mass communication. Most certainly this evidence supports the ACEJMC standard that the "faculty must be academically and professionally qualified for their responsibilities, and full-time faculty must have primary responsibility for teaching, research, and service."

Departmental Communication Units Professionally Oriented.

Communication departmental units fall primarily into colleges or schools which are acceptable for unit accreditation. For example, both journalism and communication departments are located in schools or colleges of communication, an accredible unit. This same communication department, although qualifying in terms of the college unit rule, is excluded from accreditation because the communication departmental unit is independent of journalism or mass communication departmental units. How can a department qualify under the school level and then be disqualified under the departmental unit? At this point the issue becomes one of perceived philosophy. Communication departments are viewed by ACEJMC as liberal arts and, therefore, not professional--a requirement for accreditation.

Although liberal arts tracks do exist in communication departments, professional tracks have been flourishing, and in the case of broadcast journalism, flourishing for many years. Other professional tracks in communication departments include public relations, advertising, and

marketing. The evolution toward professional programs has impacted the communication discipline in other ways. (Note: the ACEJMC discussions on the housing of broadcast journalism in both communication and journalism departments is a precedent for extending the consideration of accreditation to public relations programs) Currently most professional associations in communication are dropping the term "speech" from their title. Central States Speech Association is now Central States Communication Association. Speech Communication Association is proposed to be the American Communication Association (ACA) and the next vote should support the proposal. Speech is now identified as only one track within our discipline which includes not only rhetoric, public address, but also interpersonal communication, organizational communication, technology, intercultural/multicultural communication, etc. as well as the professional tracks listed earlier. Communication is no longer singularly focused on the liberal arts. Professional studies have been given equal status within the communication discipline and should be recognized as such by the only national accreditation body, a monopoly which makes the exclusion of quality programs based on "unit" location discriminatory.

A Certification Program Has Been Developed by PRSA for Public Relations Programs Outside of Journalism and Mass Communication Units

The reluctance of ACEJMC to include public relations programs outside the journalism and mass communication units has resulted in PRSA establishing a certification system for public relations programs. Although the idea has merit for the public relations programs excluded from the only federally sponsored certification program, the negatives are equally strong. Certification is not accreditation. Certification will not bring credibility to a department seeking federally funded programs. Two competing systems for accreditation will not resolve critical issues facing the field of public relations.

Bonita Dostal Neff, (Fall 1989). Public Relations Pedagogy: An Emerging Communication Theory Perspective. Vincent Hazleton and Carl Botan, (Eds.), Public Relations Theory, New Jersey: Erlbaum Press.

Margaret Fitch-Hauser, Deborah Roach Barker, Larry L. Barker. "A Survey of Public Relations Education in the U.S. and Canada", paper presented to the Speech Communication Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, November 1988.

APPENDIX III - Forums

SEVENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 3-6, 1988
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

4:00–6:50 p.m. **2624. ACCREDITING PUBLIC RELATIONS: LEADERS OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DIALOGUE WITH FEDERAL ACCREDITING AGENCY** **Mardi Gras E 3rd floor**

Sponsor: Commission on Public Relations

Moderator: Bonita Dostal Neff

Leaders from professional organizations concerned with public relations along with the U.S. Department of Education present perspectives on the pros and cons of accreditation. Key roleplayers are identified through a historical overview of accreditation developments. The discussants utilize research findings and professional experiences for framing issues relevant to public relations accreditation.

William Ehling, Co-chair, PRSA-AEJMC 1987 report on the curriculum for undergraduate public relations education

Margaret Fitch-Hauser, Researcher, Public Relations Programs, *Auburn University,* Al.

Larissa Grunig, Chair, Public Relations Interest Group (PRIG), International Communication Association (ICA), Secretary Treasurer of Public Relations, Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)

Elizabeth Lance-Toth, Chair, Public Relations Division, Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)

John La Vine, President, Accreditation Council of Journalism and Mass Communication (ACJMC)

Bonita Dostal Neff, Chair, Commission on Public Relations (CPR), Speech Communication Association (SCA), Chair, Task Force on Accreditation, Public Relations Interest Group (PRIG), International Communication Association (ICA)

Louisa Neilson, Executive Director, Broadcast Education Association (BEA)

Mel Sharpe, Former Chair, Public Relations Society of America's Continuing Education Board

ACCREDITATION: THE STATUS AND FUTURE OF ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION IN A PROFESSIONAL'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CAREER
1:00 - 3:20 pm
Saturday, November 18, 1989
Sponsor: Commission on Public Relations

Chair: Dr. Bonita Dostal Neff, Public Communication Associates, Munster, Indiana

"PRSA and APR: The Professional Connection"
Dr. Carol Ann Hall, APR
Head of the Public Relations Sequence
Communication Department
University of the Pacific--Stockton, California

"Communication Discipline's Fitness Rating for Program Accreditation"
Dr. Bonita Dostal Neff, Chair
Commission on Public Relations (CPR) for SCA
Head, Task Force on Accreditation
Public Relations Interest Group (PRIG)
International Communication Association (ICA)
Member, National Committee on Professional Development
Women in Communication, Inc.

"Florida's Accreditation Examination Designed for Two Levels of Professionals"
Dr. Gregg Phifer, Professor
Communication Department
Florida State University--Tallahassee
Board of Director, Capital Chapter of Florida Public Relations Association

"Its as Easy as ABC!"
Beth West, ABC
IABC Chair of Accreditation Board
Manager of Communication Service
Southern Gas Association--Dallas

These panelists present the spectrum of possible certification and/or accreditation choices for the professional.

Participants are encouraged to preregister for this session. Fee covers proceedings distributed at the conference. A tour and introduction to IABC's new national headquarters (one block from the Hilton) follows the forum presentation.

GALA SCA 75th ANNIVERSARY CONVENTION

San Francisco, California

November 18-21, 1989

San Francisco Hilton Hotel

BE THERE!
(or be sorry)

APPENDIX IV - Organizations

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS ACCREDITATION

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC)
Susanne Shaw, Executive Director
School of Journalism
Stauffer-Flint Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045
913 864-3973 or 913 864-4755

Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)
1621 College St.
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208-0251
Telephone: 803 777-2005
Membership:
- $60. Regular
- $60. Associate
- $30. Student
- Other special categories

International Communication Association
PUBLIC RELATIONS INTEREST GROUP (PRIG)
Headquarters Office
8140 Burnet Road
Austin, Texas 78758
512 454-8299
Membership: regular.....$ 80.00 Two journals, newsletter
sustaining.. 105.00 Publications plus conference fee, directory, program
PS: One division or interest group is free; each additional one is $3.00.

Public Relations Society of America
33 Irving Place
New York, New York 10003
Telephone: 212 995-2230
Member:
- Initiation Fee $60.
- Membership $175 yearly
- Additional fee for joining interest groups

Associate Member:
- No initiation fee
- Membership $120. (practitioner with less than two years but more than one year)
- $ 90. (practitioners with less than one year of experience)

Speech Communication Association
COMMISSION ON PUBLIC RELATIONS (CPR)
5105 Backlick Road, #E
Annandale, VA 22003
Telephone: 703 750-0533
Membership: Student.....$20.00
Regular.....$40.00
Sustaining....$95.00 (includes convention registration fee)

Women In Communication, Inc.
WICI, the largest professional communication group in the United States, has a representative on the ACEJMC Council. There is also a national Professional Development Committee which focuses on professional development matters, including accreditation. The committee is reviewing the North American Public Relations Council Code of Ethics.

2101 Wilson Blvd.
Suite 417
Arlington, VA 22201
Telephone: 703 528-4200
Membership: professional.....$55.00 magazine, directory
student..... 30.00 magazine, directory

ACCREDITATION AND CERTIFICATION

William Brody
Department of Journalism
Memphis State University

"Accreditation" in context with public relations education has taken on a far broader meaning than once was the case. The term is used to describe processes applied by a quasi-public organizations to schools offering undergraduate educational programs in public relations and by professional organizations to senior members. In the first instance, the organization involved is the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). In the second, the organizations are the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

ACEJMC accreditation processes are made available primarily where undergraduate public relations programs are housed in departments or schools of journalism or mass communication. No accreditation process is available for programs housed in speech communication, business, or arts and sciences.

PRSA accreditation processes traditionally have been open only to members of the society who have completed at least five years in full time professional practice. The society is preparing, however, to open the process to non-members as well as members. IABC's accreditation process is similar to that of PRSA but IABC has no plans to open its process of non-members. Possible development of a unitary accreditation program was discussed during an aborted discussion of a potential amalgamation of the two organizations several years ago and the two accreditation processes conceivably might yet be combined.

Today, however, there are two other processes in prospect. Both are called "certification" although they apparently differ little from accreditation other than in name. One is certification of academic programs. The other is certification of public relations students on graduation. Both have been proposed within the Public Relations Society of America and one will soon be in progress.

Program accreditation presumably can be granted only by agencies authorized to do so by the Council on Postsecondary Education of the U.S. Department of Education. That agency has authorized ACEJMC to function in the public relations sector and reportedly has demonstrated a marked reluctance to grant like authority elsewhere. These circumstances, coupled with requests from academic organizations that are not subject to ACEJMC accreditation or have been refused accreditation by ACEJMC, have led PRSA to establish a certification program.

The program essentially parallels that of ACEJMC, with several significant differences:

1. Costs will be lower. Candidate schools will pay a $500 administration fee in addition to the expenses of a three-person certification team during a three-day site visit. ACEJMC's comparable fees are considerably higher and accreditation visits usually are longer.

2. During a two-year introductory phase, certification will be available only to schools with PRSA-chartered chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America. Afterward, the program may be open to academic units without such chapters that have PRSA members on their faculties.

3. All involved in the certification process will be accredited members of PRSA. Certification site visit teams will include educators as well as practitioners.

4. Certification will be granted for seven years rather than the five years usually covered by ACEJMC accreditation but certified schools will be required to bring pre-certification questionnaires up to date and resubmit them at two-year intervals subsequent to certification.

Two schools -- one ACEJMC-accredited and the second ineligible for ACEJMC accreditation -- have requested

certification. Site visits are expected to be scheduled before year's end for both of them.

While the program certification program moves ahead, however, student certification is another matter. The proposed student certification program under study by PRSA remains far from implementation. The concept, under which certification examinations would be offered to graduating seniors, has been considered on several occasions within the Public Relations Society. The proposed examination presumably would be an entry-level substitute for PRSA's professional accreditation process. Student society members have asked that the professional group consider waiving or reducing, for graduates of accredited public relations programs, the five-year pre-accreditation experience requirement.

Student certification is being studied by PRSA's Educational Advisory Committee, co-chaired for 1989 by David Ferguson of Hill & Knowlton, Chicago, and E.W. Brody of Memphis State University. The committee is reviewing results of a study undertaken several years ago which resulted in the society's abandoning an earlier effort toward student certification. Potential cost and legal liabilities were primary factors in that decision.

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM OF THE FLORIDA PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

GREGG PHIFER
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY-TALLAHASSEE

The oldest statewide professional association in public relations is the Florida Public Relations Association, founded in 1938 as the Florida Association of Publicity Directors. Eight men, meeting at Silver springs and representing various Florida attractions, felt that there was strength in union and called a meeting in Tampa for that same year. Fifty responded to the call and formed FAPD, the predecessor of what we now know as FPRA.

In 1980 FPRA joined with allied organizations to form the North American Public Relations council (NAPRC). This council includes the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Women in Communications Inc. (WICI). National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA), and the Texas Public Relations Association. From time to time two or more of these organizations have discussed mergers, but so far these have not reached fruition.

FPRA has pioneered in a number of areas. For example, discussion of a code of ethics took place in the early 1950s and a code was adopted in 1959. A statewide Golden Image Awards competition is now in its third decade. Chapters in various Florida cities were chartered starting in 1956.

Another pioneering effort in the early 1970s saw development of accreditation (APRP) and certification (CPRC) programs. These remain, as far as we know, the nation's only two-tier program for recognizing professionalism in public relations. APRP and CPRC designations have gained increasing prestige with the passage of time and now attract candidates from over the state to take the mandated written and oral day-long examinations. In 1989, 45 have applied for APRP, 21 for CPRC. This is by far the largest group of candidates in FPRA history, but not all will take or pass the examinations. They are challenging but not impossible.

REQUIREMENTS FOR APRP

A minimum of five years of professional experience is required before an FPRA member can stand for the required examinations. Completing the requirements for designation as an Accredited Public Relations Professional (APRP) is a symbol of professionalism in a field where state licensure is nonexistent and unlikely. In the last few years an increasing number of FPRA members are taking the examination as they become qualified to do so.

The APRP examination is an all-day affair requiring three hours in the morning and another three in the afternoon, followed by an hour of questions from three FPRA members already holding the APRP designation. Preparation for this exam, especially the morning section, requires a reasonable degree of familiarity with a basic public relations text. References are given to the most popular of the PR texts--Cutlip, Center, and Broom, Effective Public Relations, sixth edition. Students with a background in the academic study of public relations have usually studied some basic text and the transition to CCB is not difficult.

COMPLETION OF A SELF-AUDIT

Every candidate for APRP accreditation pays a fee of $75 and completes a self-audit. This self-audit requires that the candidate subscribe to the FPRA Code of Ethics and provide the Accreditation Committee with information about relevant background and activities, permitting a check on the required five years of professional experience.

The self-audit helps the candidate evaluate his/her own abilities and experiences in public relations. First comes a stock report of personal/professional background, including academic background, academic and professional honors and awards. Next the candidate indicates the many activities that currently describe his/her personal/professional background. These include writing and editing, graphics, audio-visuals, special events, consultation, and administration/management.

Next the candidate describes professional activities and interest, including the length of membership in FPRA and any service in chapter or statewide committees. All are asked, What has motivated you to seek professional accreditation?" This forces an introspection valuable to the candidate as well as the Accreditation Committee. Overlapping membership is, of course, quite common among public relations professionals, since there are specialized organizations in hospital PR, public schools, colleges and universities (CASE--council for the Advancement and Support of Education), and others. The self-audit asks to what other professional associations/societies the candidate belongs.

The final part of the self-audit concerns organizational analysis. In this section the candidate described the organization of his/her public relations firm, agency, department, or other operation. In the section on Activities, Services and Finances, candidates are asked to "Describe how you plan a public relations program for your organization or (if working in an agency) a public relations project for your clients."

Evaluation is universally recognized as one of the weak links of early "publicity" efforts, so the self-audit asks: "Do you evaluate the results/outcomes of the programs/projects noted above? If so, how do you do it. If evaluation is not part of your responsibilities within your firm/agency . . . does it occur at all? If so, who does it and how?"

A different aspect of public relation success is tapped by questions that ask "How is the time you spend on the job each day related to your organization's overall financial success?" Another question requires candidates to consider, "In terms of this financial success, how could you be more productive to your organization?"

A final section of the audit requires the candidate to look back and look ahead. Here are three important questions:

"Describe the recent growth pattern of your organization, firm/agency, or department. Indicate the status now, three years ago, and, if possible, five years ago. Also indicate the estimated potential." Since public relations is an itinerant profession, this is not always an easy question to answer.

"Given the current economic climate and present social situations, what is/are the major problem(s) facing you (organization) at this time? What solutions would you recommend?"

"Given rapidly changing conditions at local, state, national, and international levels, what do you feel will be the single most important problem your clients/publics/constituents will be faced with over the next 3-5 years, and how (if at all) is your organization prepared or planning to deal with that problem?"

Thoughtful completion of the self-audit requires a substantial investment of time and energy on the part of the candidate. This is reviewed by the Accreditation Committee primarily to see that the candidate has been in the profession for the required time and has thought seriously about what he or she is doing. Upon receipt at state headquarters of the self-audit and verification of the required years of experience, the candidate is sent an accreditation study guide and confirmation of written and oral examination dates.

PREPARING FOR THE APRP EXAMINATION

The APRP Study Guide covers some 57 pages divided into four major sections. One deals with the accreditation process itself, starting with the self-audit covering the written and oral examinations, and including a section on results (notifications, appeals, re-examination where the candidate fails on the first try).

Section two concerns personal preparation, including both strategic studying and test-taking tactics. Remember that even those with a strong academic background have been away from school five years or more and a reminder of what they once knew and a review of on-the-job learning will be desirable. Many professionals whose skills have been honed through repeated experience need to stop and reflect on what they have done and how they have done it. Theory and practice need to be integrated.

Professionals with five years (often more) of experience already have learned to

--locate information and do (or at least commission) research;
--make up budget and live with them;
--allocate resources of time, money, facilities, and personnel;
--work under pressure to meet deadlines;
--collaborate with other professionals: designers, art directors, printers, photographers, accountants, attorneys, public officials, etc.;
--deal with people, especially those who know little about public relations;
--communicate successfully both orally and in writing;
--evaluate the results of such communications;
--set realistic goals and objectives that can be measured; and
--mobilize their own talents and those of others to achieve the desired results.

Candidates for the APRP designation need to review their experiences and--using a list such as the one given here--evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. Here the candidates need to make a systematic review of some basic text in the field--CCB is recommended, but others (just about any text used in undergraduate study) can also be used. The table of contents suggests areas where the candidate must review material learned at an earlier date or put experiences into a pattern easily recalled during the limited time of the examination period.

CCB categories the public relations process into four steps: RPCE, Research, Preparation, Communication, and Evaluation. Whether reviewing what happened during a campaign or a crisis, or designing a program of one's own, this serves well as a framework into which specific activities can be pegged. Students design their own memory techniques to enable rapid recall during the time pressures of the examination period. There is nothing wrong with mnemonic devices; they may help when confronted with a question and a recommended time limit. Journalists learn early-on the five W's and H; during research for a story they don't have to stop and think about each of these while conducting an interview.

Many FPRA chapters organize study groups in which candidates for the APRP examination work together for mutual reinforcement and maximum learning. Chapter members who have taken the examination earlier often assist by providing guidance to important topics and materials to study. They also reassure candidates that the task is not beyond their reach IF they are willing to put forth enough effort to be well prepared when examination day arrives.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Over the decades of the accreditation program many examinations have been prepared. Each one is different, but each attempts to probe into the same essential body of knowledge. All examinations seek to permit the candidate to show what h/she knows about the profession and its activities. There is no attempt to "track" candidates or find out that they haven't memorized all the lists of CCB--or even the FPRA Code of Ethics.

Some lists are important. CCB discusses seven trends in American society. Even though there is nothing magic in any particular number, the candidate ought to see the broad picture of which public relations professionals must be cognizant. No one enjoys butting one's head against a stone wall; an understanding of trends in the broader society--the U.S. and the world--helps prevent serious and unnecessary blunders. Recognizing these trends helps the practitioner develop a plan that capitalizes on trends and attitudes that are well established in today's highly interrelated society. What happens in Europe and Asia directly affects companies doing business in the United States.

Here are a few sample questions of the kind that might well appear on one of the APRP examinations:

*Anyone working in public relations should become acquainted with some of the pioneers in the field. Identify each of the following in a sentence or a short paragraph: Ivy Lee, George Creel, Carl Byoir, Edward L. Bernays, Arthur W. Page.

*During World War I the Committee on Public Information succeeded beyond expectations in promoting meatless days, the conservation of wheat and sugar, and in the promotion of successful war bond drives. Out of the experiences of this committee came the hypodermic needle or "bullet" theory of mass communication. Explain the theory and the reason(s) why it developed out of the success of CPI.

*Public relations is an enormously broad field including many activities. It is often confused with one of its parts, such as publicity or (earlier, perhaps) press-agentry. List and describe in a sentence or two four other activities in which public relation people often become involved.

*You have been hired to work for a utility with a brand-new nuclear power plant. You remember from classroom discussions back at your alma mater the problems of Metropolitan Edison at the time of Three Mile Island. How will you go about selling your top management on the need for a crisis plan? (This may not be necessary, but for purposes of this question assume that your top management is not really alert to the contributions public relations professionals can make. Describe all important aspects of the crisis plan you will recommend. Think this through carefully. Take about thirty minutes for your answer.

*Assume for purposes of this question that state licensure of public relation professionals is unlikely, maybe impossible. What have organizations like FPRA done to encourage professionalism in members working in the field? Would you recommend any additional steps, and if so, what would they be?

*Lawyers tend to advise their clients to clam up, to say as little as possible and nothing at all ("No comment!) much of the time. You are well aware that "No comment" is like a red flag to the media bull. From your own experience or from you reading (PR Journal or other sources), describe a situation in which you and the lawyer are likely to offer contradictory advice to top management. Argue your case for the advantages of openness with the print and electronic media.

*Assume that you have been hired to work with one of the established Florida attractions. (Choose Silver Springs, Homosassa Springs, the Monkey Jungle, Wet and Wild, or any one with which you are more familiar.) Discuss briefly five ways in which you would work to maximize media exposure for your client.

CPR CERTIFICATION

After five years in the field all members of FPRA are encouraged to take the APRP examination. When they pass the examination they earn recognition as an Accredited Public Relations Professional which remains with them as long as they remain member of FPRA. This is, in effect, a permanent designation of professionalism in the field.

The second level of certification offered by the Florida Public Relations Association is not designed for all members. It is intended to be more than a measure of consulting skills, knowledge and writing ability on a particular day. Certification as a Public Relations Consultant makes a statement of professional achievement and commitment, a measure of individual expertise and contribution to society through one's excellence in his/her chosen profession.

Statewide only a handful of FPRA members achieved CPRC certification until late in the 1980s. Now that more and more members are taking and passing the APRP examination, FPRA now for the first time takes seriously the statement that CPRC is not a permanent designation, but one that needs to be maintained by service to the profession and to the community at large.

Until recently only leaders in the profession in Florida, men and women whose names are recognized by professionals throughout the state and who made important contributions to FPRA and to the status of the profession, had taken the required examination and achieved CPRC certification. The examination they took was familiarly referred to as "APRP II." A record eight members took the examination in 1988.

CPRC certification has always been intended to be renewed every two years. In theory the CPRC would be retained only if the member continued to contribute in important ways to the profession and to the state. In practice, however, the Accreditation Committee had never taken steps to enforce this requirement. The obligation of continued service and excellence remained firm in principle but good intentions fell short when it came to enforcement.

In the past the requirements for taking the CPRC examination have been the same as those for APRP, five years of experience in the profession. Under study is some way of differentiating the prerequisites for taking the CPRC examination from those for APRP. More time in the profession, or certain achievements or contributions to the field, or service to FPRA itself, or some combination thereof might be necessary before a member could take the second examination. It seems probable that some change may be made in the next few years.

Retention of this designation as a Certified Public Relations Consultant offers a second challenge. What must the member do to show that h/she deserves to retain the certification once achieved? At present a committee of FPRA members chaired by Rick Oppenheim of R B Oppenheim Associates (Tallahassee) is studying how to make this process meaningful.

It is too early to say just what requirements may eventually be laid down for retaining CPRC certification. But it seems probable that the free and easy approach to the question will be a thing of the past within the next year or two.

The Committee believes, in the word of Chairman Oppenheim, that "it is time for FPRA to spell out in advance just what CPRC really means and to clearly communicate to current and potential CPRCs precisely what is expected of them." Their objectives in developing standards for maintenance of the CPRC certification include the following:

1. To establish guidelines for maintenance of the CPRC designation.
2. To encourage holders of the CPRC rank to stay abreast of development in the public relations industry.
3. To provide incentives for advanced practitioners to provide leadership in the profession and have their knowledge and skills with developing professionals.
4. To reward continuing active involvement in FPRA at the local chapter and statewide levels.
5. To provide a vehicle for FPRA's recognition of extraordinary contributions to the association, the public relations profession, and their communities.
6. To develop reporting and review procedures that will adequately evaluate CPRC maintenance with minimum expense and administrative workload.
7. To enhance the value and credibility of the certification program and the CPRC designation.

These are general objectives with which it is difficult to quarrel. A more critical and more practical question is the ways and means through which the CPRC may demonstrate that he or she deserves to retain the CPRC once earned. Here are some early suggestions to which others may be added as the committee continues its labors:

a. Since the designation is awarded by FPRA, continued membership in and service to the association itself is one criterion. This may include such items as work on FPRA committees, service in an FPRA office, assisting with the annual convention.

b. Attendance at, organizing, or making presentations at the annual convention, at workshops represented by FPRA, or similar activities under sponsorship of PRSA, IABC, or allied organizations.

c. Lectures or presentations to student classes or student chapters of FPRA. Contributions to public relations classes at colleges and universities in Florida.

d. Writing for Esprit, for various chapter publications, for PR Journal, or for other publications. Books or papers for scholarly organizations would fit the same category.

e. Service as a spokesperson for public relations before legislative committees or in response to questions from the print or electronic media.

f. Awards or recognition for professional activity. Winning recognition in FPRA's Golden Image competition or similar activities under other sponsorship.

g. Other service to the community, to civic organizations, to Chambers of Commerce, to city or county commissions or the state legislature.

h. Pro bono service to United Way, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project International, Muscular Dystrophy, or other non-profit organizations.

i. Any other relevant professional activities or community service.

It would be possible to develop over time a point system for recognition of activities such as those listed here. The committee may also establish standards that would be challenging but not impossible for someone deeply involved with his or her profession to meet.

In all this evaluation there should be no intention to eliminate people or make the CPRC designation the province of only a select few favored by the officers or committee chairs of FPRA at any particular time. The evaluations should be objective, conducted without relation to the individual names involved. This process should encourage continued professionalism and service to public relations, and discourage anyone from resting on the laurels of a CPRC designation once achieved.

ADDITIONAL RECOGNITION

It would also be possible for FPRA to recognize at its annual conventions outstanding service to the profession by one or more of those holding the CPRC designation. Surely one or more members would, through activities such as those listed here, deserve special recognition of some kind. A plaque of distinguished service to the profession might be one way of recognizing those truly outstanding members of FPRA whose continued education to the profession serves as a standard encouraging others to measure up to their full potential.

It would be possible, for example, for one of the CPRC members to be designated as the Florida Public relations Professional of the Year. In common with similar awards made by other professional societies, this one should not be automatically given the senior or the highest ranking CPRC, but would be reserved for those years in which someone stood out for contributions to FPRA, to the profession, and to society above and beyond the call of duty.

Monitoring and verifying the achievements by FPRA's CPRCs will require development of forms and directions for biennial reports by all certified members. Again, these will emerge as the Accreditation Committee reviews these regular reports by FPRA's CPRCs. If anyone in the Association should be expected to abide by the Code of Ethics and its requirements for total honesty in all transactions, it should certainly be those who have achieved this highest rank in FPRA. The benefit of the doubt is always theirs, but instructions for these reports should probably encourage submission of programs, reprints, and other evidence of activity in or on behalf of the profession.

FOR THE FUTURE

Discussions within the framework of the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC) currently offer the possibility of join accreditation efforts. PRSA, for example, has its APR designation, and some members of IABC have been recognized as Accredited Business communicators. The other large state association, that in Texas, has never considered establishing an accreditation program.

Joint efforts at accreditation offer possibilities that should certainly be pursued further. Into the mix, however, FPRA would probably recommend that its second level of certification, as a Certified Public Relations Consultant, be employed to recognize leaders in the profession. This offers something above and beyond the professional recognition of basic accreditation. the first level (APRP in FPRA) establishes that the member is competent in what public relations professionals are hired to do. The second (CPRC) identifies those leaders of the profession in Florida who are setting standards and guiding FPRA members into the twenty-first century.

It's as Easy as ABC!

Beth West, ABC
Chairman, Accreditation Board
of the International Association of Business Communicators
Manager of Communication Services, Southern Gas Association, Dallas, TX

Lest you think ABC refers to a broadcasting organization, let me explain that in this case it is an acronym for "Accredited Business Communicator," an accreditation program sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

What is IABC?
IABC began in 1970 with a merger between the American Association of Industrial Editors and the International Council of Industrial Editors. Corporate Communicators Canada joined in 1974. In its first year of operation, IABC had 2,280 members and a budget of approximately U.S. $100,000.

It is a worldwide association for the communication and public relations profession. It was founded on the principle that the better an organization communicates with all its audiences, the more successful and effective it will be in meeting its objectives.

IABC is dedicated to fostering communication excellence, contributing more effectively to organizational goals worldwide, and being a model of communication effectiveness.

Today, IABC has more than 11,000 members in 124 cities in 32 countries (Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, France, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Venezuela, West Germany and West Indies). Its budget now exceeds $2.7 million annually.

In 1974, IABC first offered an accreditation program. Its purpose is to provide a means by which you can gauge your career progress in the field of organizational communication.

ABC – the Mark of a PROfessional
The accreditation program is aimed at the skills-practicing manager, or the person who has developed the broad or well rounded professional expertise to move into or advance in communication management. It offers the opportunity to test your skills against standards set by your peers. Earning IABC accreditation demonstrates to your fellow communicators, to present and prospective employers and clients, and (perhaps most importantly) to yourself, that you have attained this important milestone in professional development.

The program rewards the communicator who can identify problems, set objectives and develop workable solutions; one who can design and implement a communication program and then execute and evaluate it. The accreditation procedure is not designed to accredit persons whose expertise is limited to one or two communication skills, be they writing, editing publications, producing audio-visual material or handling media relations. The successful candidate for accreditation will have experience in or knowledge of how to design and manage a broad range of communication programs.

What's required
Now that we've established what IABC is and why it has an accreditation program, let's look at the specifics on how to earn your own ABC.

To become accredited, you must submit an application (along with one-half of the fee), submit a portfolio of your work that demonstrates your professionalism and successfully complete written and oral examinations.

You should be able to become accredited if you

- ◆ understand the goals and philosophy of organizational communication
- ◆ comprehend the role of the communicator and communication in today's organizations, including a knowledge of what communication can and cannot do
- ◆ possess the knowledge to plan and implement a broad range of communication programs
- ◆ have the skills and abilities to apply that knowledge to practical, real-life situations.

If you are a business or organizational communicator and you meet the following prerequisites, you may apply:

You must have a minimum of five years' (5) experience in the profession and a Bachelor's degree, or a total of nine (9) years of combined post-secondary education and/or experience (see chart below). And, you must be known to abide by the principles of accuracy, truthfulness and good taste.

How to apply

You can get an application form from IABC headquarters in San Francisco. The address is One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94102; (415) 433-3400. Ask for Rae Hamlin, the IABC staff executive in charge of accreditation.

When you return your completed application form, include one-half the accreditation fee. (See fee schedule on page 4). ***IABC accreditation is now open to nonmembers as well as members.***

The application form requires information on your education and work experience. You may also include supporting information, such as a résumé, if you think it necessary for an accurate evaluation of your background. Applications are judged on the quality and clarity of information included, not on the quantity of material submitted. After your application is approved, you will be sent *Step 1, Getting Ready for Accreditation*, which contains details on how to prepare your portfolio. You must submit your portfolio within two (2) years after your application is approved, as long as you still meet the basic eligibility requirments.

Your application should be a comprehensive summary of your professional experience and qualifications. Your eligibility to take the accreditation examinations is determined in large measure from the information you provide, so it is in your best interest to be as complete and candid as possible. Evaluators will check to see that you've met the basic eligibili-

Education/Experience requirements for IABC Accreditation

Years of full-time communication experience	Degree or years of post-secondary education
Nine	None
Eight	One year
Seven	Associate of Arts degree/two years
Six	Three years
Five	Bachelor's degree or higher

ty requirements and will look for evidence of general career progress and experience in a number of areas of organizational communication.

If you do not meet the prerequisites on the basis of your application, the Accreditation Board will not accept you as a candidate for accreditation.

Preparing your portfolio
You must submit four samples of your best work as a communicator. These should reflect as broad a range of communication types and media as your experience has allowed. See *Step 1, Getting Ready for Accreditation* for more information on portfolio preparation.

Here are just a few examples of what may be submitted (the list is not all-inclusive)

- communication programs (written proposals or descriptions of the completed programs if examples of the entire program can't be sent – do not send proposals which have not yet been implemented)
- entire publications (three consecutive issues, if it is a recurring publication)
- communication surveys
- campaigns
- audio-visual programs – slide or slide-sound presentations, movies, videotapes, etc.

Two of the work samples must be accompanied by detailed statements of objectives and results covering

- the nature of the problem or opportunity the sample was designed to address
- the objectives of the sample, how they relate to your organization and data on how well the sample met its objectives
- the nature and extent of your involvement with the sample
- the budget for the sample, including information on whether you set the budget or whether it was imposed by other persons or outside circumstances
- the size of audience or distribution
- the characteristics of the audience
- the timing for the sample or project
- your own evaluation of the sample: knowing what you know now, were your objectives on target; was the budget adequate and timing correct; was the audience targeted correctly; was the choice of media right; what would you have done differently and why?
- any other information, such as time limitations or other developmental constraints, that the Accreditation Board should know about the sample in order to evaluate it fairly.

Your portfolio should demonstrate what you actually have accomplished as a professional communicator. It will be evaluated by two or more Accredited Business Communicators. Judges will be selected who do not know you. You will be identified to the judges because your work samples must contain your name and the scope of your involvement with the project. Because work samples will vary – plans, proposals, audits, campaigns, publications, films, etc. – each sample will be judged from two standpoints: first, how well it meets the stated objectives; second, how well it meets professional standards for work in that medium.

(The portfolio judging is the only time when judges know who you are. When you take your written and oral exams, you will be assigned a five-digit number. Only that number will appear on your test papers and

on the tape which will be made of your oral exam.)

If your portfolio does not receive qualifying scores, you will not be eligible to take the written and oral exams. You will receive a detailed explanation of the reasons you did not pass. You may rework your portfolio to correct noted weaknesses and resubmit it, or you may wait until you feel you have gained the necessary experience. There is no fee to resubmit your portfolio if you do so within the two-year time frame described earlier.

If your score on the portfolio indicates you may have trouble passing the exams, the Board will recommend that you postpone taking them until you improve in your areas of indicated weakness. In this case, the choice is yours – you may proceed with the exams, or you may decide to wait. If, as a result of the Board's comments, you decide to wait, your samples will be returned to you; you may use them in resubmitting a portfolio that more clearly demonstrates that you have achieved the level of professionalism required for accreditation.

Once the examination is complete, suitable samples from successful candidates' portfolios are placed in the IABC Communication Bank. Therefore, do not send irreplaceable materials; if necessary, send photocopies. However, if some of the samples simply must be returned (confidential material, for example, or audio-visual programs, videotapes, etc.), please mark them accordingly and IABC will invoice you for the return postage.

You may submit your portfolio any time within two years after your application is approved. To allow time for judging your portfolio before a specific examination date, you should submit according to the following schedule

If you plan to take the written/oral exams at the	You must submit your portfolio by
District Conference	July 1
International Accreditation Day	October 1
International Conference	March 1

International Accreditation Day occurs each year in February on a date selected by the Accreditation Board. Eligible candidates may take the exams at various locations determined by the Accreditation Board for the convenience of the candidates.

If a sufficient number of people in one area become eligible, the Board will arrange for an additional examination date.

The entire accreditation process must be completed within two years after your application is approved. You must take the written and oral examinations within one year after your portfolio is approved. Extensions beyond this one-year period will be considered by the Accreditation Board on a case-by-case basis.

If you do not complete the accreditation process within the required two years, you must start the entire process over to become accredited, including resubmitting your application and full fees.

Fees

When you apply for accreditation, you must submit one-half of the fee. The other half is to be submitted following approval of your portfolio. The fee helps offset the costs of administering the accreditation program. The fee is payable in the currency of your country in the equivalent of

Member	Nonmember
U.S. $125	U.S. $350
CDN $150	CDN $425
UK £55	UK £225

Nonmembers are required to pay an administration fee of $100 due on the anniversary date when notification was received that he/she passed.

An additional fee of US $50 will be charged for a re-examination that might be required.

The examination procedure
Written and oral examinations are conducted at the annual IABC conference (usually held in May or June), at IABC district conferences (held in the Fall), on International Accreditation Day, and by special arrangement. Normally, a minimum of five (5) candidates is required to hold a special examination.

All materials necessary for taking the examinations are supplied by the proctor in charge. You may bring your own typewriter, but you may not bring any resource materials (dictionaries, style books, textbooks, references, notes, etc.). Typewritten examinations are preferred; legible handwritten exams are permissible. Keep in mind that the written portion takes four hours, and your hand will get very tired long before the four hours are over.

You may use a personal computer, but we discourage it. If you use a computer, you must surrender all disks and clear the memory. You are not allowed extra time in the event of a power surge or printer problem. Further, all printing must be done within the time allotted for the exam.

You have four and one-half hours for the exam – four hours for the written portion and 30 minutes for the oral. Copies of your completed written exam, identified only by a pre-assigned, five-digit random number, will be sent to three evaluators who will have no clue as to your identity. (Evaluators who even suspect that they may know a candidate's identity from the written examination are required to disqualify themselves.) These evaluators will individually judge your answers and forward their scores to the Accreditation Board chair for compilation and final review.

Oral examinations are normally evaluated by those who conduct the exam and are always tape-recorded. If the on-site oral evaluators know you or would prefer not to judge your presentation, your oral exam will be judged, via the tape recording, by a separate team of evaluators. Again, only your pre-assigned number will be used during the oral.

If your portfolio is judged as borderline or marginally deficient, it will be sent for review. Similarly, the tape recording of your oral exam will be available for review. If your written exam grades are marginal, copies of the written exam will be sent to another team of three evaluators. In each area – portfolio, oral exam, written exam – the new evaluators will not know they are conducting a re-evaluation.

We try to notify you of your exam results within 90 days.

A word of caution: Once you are scheduled to take the exam at a specified time and place, you must do so. Absence without prior notice and a legitimate excuse is an automatic failure. You may submit a written appeal to the Accreditation Council.

If you fail the accreditation exam, you will receive a written evaluation of your performance on the written and oral portions to aid you in strengthening areas of perceived weakness. If you failed a section of the written exam or the oral exam, you may become accredited by retaking and passing only that portion. (If you failed all sections, you'd have to retake and pass all sections.)

You may be re-examined at the next available date. All re-examinations require a re-examination fee and must be completed within two years of the original exam.

You may appeal a negative decision by submitting a written request for consideration to IABC within 30 days of notification of failure. The Accreditation Council, which is responsible for the management of the accreditation program, will review all materials in your file and reach a final decision on your appeal, usu-

ally within 60 days. Only one appeal is permitted.

All correspondence concerning accreditation or the examinations should be directed to IABC for referral to the appropriate accreditation officials. All details pertaining to your request for accreditation and your performance on the exams will be kept confidential by everyone involved in the accreditation process. (Only two people know the names of all candidates -- the staff executive in charge of the program and the Accreditation Board chair.) Your accreditation records are kept in locked files at IABC headquarters and no information will be released without your written consent.

Scoring and evaluation

Your final score is determined by how well you do on the three elements of the accreditation process: the portfolio, the written exam and the oral exam. The portfolio counts for 25% of your total score for accreditation. The written exam is worth 58% of the overall score, and the oral, 17%.

In order to be accredited, you must achieve an overall average score of "4 -- satisfactory" for all elements of the accreditation procedure and score no less than "3.5 -- somewhat less than satisfactory" on any single element. The written exam has three sections; you must score 3.5 or above on each.

This 0-to-7 point scoring system is used throughout the accreditation process:

0 -- question unanswered, dead wrong; a totally inappropriate response
1 -- POOR: performance well below that expected of an average beginner in communication; a generally inadequate response to the question
2 -- Much less than satisfactory
3 -- Somewhat less than satisfactory
4 -- SATISFACTORY: performance expected of a good, competent communicator; a fully adequate response
5 -- Somewhat more than satisfactory
6 -- Much more than satisfactory
7 -- OUTSTANDING: performance worthy of a leader in the field; an extraordinary and insightful response to the question.

The written examination

These are the three sections of the written exam:

General Knowledge of Organizational Communication -- worth 40% of the written examination, this section tests your knowledge of communication concepts and tools, and your ability to write or perform professional communication activities based on actual assignments completed during the examination.

Developing a Full-Range Communication Program -- worth 40% of the written examination, this section tests your ability to think through and develop a complete communication program for a specific organizational or case. A choice of situations is provided; you may choose the one most in line with your knowledge or professional experience.

Philosophy of Organizational Communication -- worth 20% of the written examination, this section tests your comprehension of the ethics of organizational communication, of management principles related to communication, and of the communicator's role in their application.

The written examination is basically an essay test, although the required answers may vary in length from a simple listing, outline, or point-form answer, to a brief one-paragraph answer to a more extensive treatment covering several pages. Some of the questions will have generally accepted "correct" answers, and your responses will be graded against those standards. However, other questions -- generally the more important ones -- will allow for more open-ended responses; on these questions, your answers will be judged on their general content, comprehensiveness, logic, organization and clarity of presentation. Many of the questions will require you to analyze or solve communication problems; here, your answers will be evaluated in terms of their insight, ap-

plicability, creativity where appropriate and their practicality in a real-world setting.

The oral examination
The oral exam tests your ability to make an extemporaneous presentation under the pressure of a real-time deadline. While 30 minutes are reserved for the oral examination, the actual time will take between 20 and 25 minutes. You will be presented with an in-basket situation described through simulated working documents – memos, letters, news clips, etc. You will have 15 minutes to study the documents and about 10 minutes to present your diagnosis of the problem(s) and your proposed solution(s).

The oral examiners will be evaluating these five factors: your effectiveness in identifying pertinent data from the working documents; your ability to make a persuasive, clear presentation; your skill in perceiving and reacting sensitively to the feelings of others; your selection of logical conclusions; and your efforts to influence events.

Samples of written, oral exam questions
More information on the written and oral exams, including sample questions for both, are contained in a publication called *Step 2, Preparing for the Oral and Written Examinations.* You will receive this booklet, free of charge, when your portfolio has been approved. It may be purchased by anyone, at any time, for:

U.S. $5
CDN $6
UK £3

Contact IABC headquarters.

Preparation for accreditation
Most IABC-accredited communicators have accumulated their professional knowledge and skills through a combination of professional education and experience. You can't really study for the written and oral exams, but a reasonable amount of review may be helpful in preparing for the exams, particularly if it has been some time since you've taken an examination and feel you're out of practice.

The management and craft skills accreditation is designed to cover are listed below. You will not be tested on all of these, only those subjects listed in **boldface**. The other skills are included in questions with a number of options, so you can pick and choose areas with which you are most familiar. You will not be expected to know technical aspects of areas normally outside the professional knowledge of a communication generalist (like statistical considerations of validity in survey samples, or the color characteristics of flexographic inks).

These are the areas covered:

Communication ethics
Written communication
News writing
Feature writing
Speech writing
Newsletter editing and layout
Magazine editing and layout
Photography basics
Graphic design
Writing for audiovisuals and video
Speakers bureaus
Event and conference planning/support
Writing proposals for communication progams
Publication management
General management skills
Media contact
Budgeting and cost control
Audience/constituent research
Writing communication plans
Project management
Time management
Member communication
Goal setting
Measurement of effectiveness
Oral presentation
Communication in support of marketing
Employee communication program management
Organizational culture and politics
Consulting skills
Problem solving
Community relations program management
Investor/shareholder communication
Feedback systems

These skills are covered further in the professional development program, Outline for Career Analysis and Development, available from IABC headquarters. The skills generally needed for accreditation are those found in levels 1 to 3 on IABC's Career Development Matrix. As a prudent candidate for accreditation, you should briefly survey these listed skills and assess your strengths and weaknesses. Any formal or informal preparation for the

exams could then be tailored to your individual requirements.

Many experienced communicators find it useful to brush up on the fundamentals, particularly the philosophical, planning and management aspects of organizational communication. On the other hand, communicators with less practical experience might want to review the theoretical basics of communication problem solving.

Accreditation workshops are offered throughout the year by the Accreditation Board. These workshops review the basic content of the accreditation workbooks *Step 1* and *Step 2* and review the basic contents of the process in detail. Although you are encouraged to attend one of these workshops if you can – you'll get more of an insight into what's expected – your attendance is certainly not mandatory. The workshop is not designed to teach you what you need to pass the examinations. It is designed to answer your questions, perhaps calm your fears, and give you the confidence to put forth the effort that's needed.

There are many sources of useful information about organizational communication. Among them are IABC publications, reference files, educational materials, seminars and conferences. You may request a current bibliography from IABC headquarters; careful review of key references on this or other bibliographies of organizational communication would certainly be appropriate if you think you're weak in certain areas.

Use of Accreditation
Successful candidates may use the designation "ABC" or "IABC Accredited" on letterheads or business cards. Accreditation is for individuals only; the designation may not be used in such a way that it implies that a company, organization, publication or other communication effort is accredited.

Administration of program
Responsibility for administering the program rests with the Accreditation Board. Members are appointed from accredited members of IABC and are eligible for one additional term.

The Accreditation Council, consisting of seven senior members of the Accreditation Board, is charged with managing and updating the program. The Council's – and the Board's – primary concern is to maintain the integrity of the program and ensure that it remains a valid indicator of professional communication. The Council meets at least twice a year to review the status of the program, set operational policy and implement any changes needed to strengthen the accreditation process.

Joint accreditation
You've probably heard rumors over the past couple of years that IABC and PRSA are going to merge their accreditation programs, if not the organizations themselves.

To address the second portion of that rumor first, the "M" word– merger, melding, meeting of memberships of the two organizations– isn't going to happen. Talks between the two organizations were halted last year.

However, through the North American Public Relations Council, which is made up of 13 organizations, including IABC and PRSA, talks addressing a joint accreditation program are in their early stages. The first meeting of the Joint Accreditation Task Force is scheduled for October, 1989. (This paper was prepared in late July, 1989.) As you know from your own business experience, a joint effort involving 13 highly independent and proud organizations – some national, some international in scope -- isn't going to move very quickly. My point is that we are working in good faith toward a common program, but it will take a while.

Value of Accreditation
Finally, the question of the day: *Why should you do it?*

If I could *prove* that accreditation means more money, we'd have so many applicants I'd have to resign my "real" job just to manage the program. However, we can only point to inferences. For instance, *Profile 89*, IABC's biennial survey of the profession, shows that ABCs earn an average salary of U.S. $51,800 versus $40,300 for non-accredited members. That's 28.5% more. In *Profile 87*, those figures were $47,900 against $37,000. There's no way know if accreditation has a bearing on those salaries, or if the people who are aggressive enough to seek their ABCs show that same aggressive professionalism in their careers, also.

There are other benefits. For instance, one ABC is now a teaching fellow at Harvard. When she applied for the fellowship, she was initially rejected because she did not have a Master's degree. In her successful appeal, she cited her accreditation and what was required to get it. She is now working toward her PhD at Harvard. Still an avid supporter of accreditation, she has just completed a six-year term on the Accreditation Board.

While my own accreditation didn't get me into Harvard – it might have, had I tried! – it was the deciding factor in landing my two most recent jobs. In both instances, when faced with otherwise equally qualified candidates, the employers were swayed by the ABC after my name. My situation is not unique; ABCs frequently tell me accreditation pays off in the marketplace.

Last, but certainly not least, is the challenge of testing yourself against exacting standards. I will never compete in the Boston Marathon, but I know the heady feel of that kind of success. And, you can, too.

Who to contact?

IABC
One Hallidie Plaza, Suite 600
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 433-3400

For information on accreditation, ask for Rae Hamlin; for membership applications, talk with Patricia Gundry.

Or, if you have general questions about the program, call me at (214) 387-8505.

ABC - the mark of a PROfessional

PRSA AND APR:
THE PROFESSIONAL CONNECTION

By Dr. Carol Ann Hall, APR
Head, Public Relations Sequence
Communication Department
University of the Pacific, Stockton, CA

Fewer than 3% of the estimated 143,000 Public Relations practitioners have taken and passed the Public Relations Society of America's Accreditation examination.

Twice a year PRSA administers the examination to eligible PR practitioners with five years of full-time experience in the field. According to PRSA, "those who devote the extra time and effort to become Accredited demonstrate those special qualities that characterize a true professional."

Roberta Wong Murray, APR, president of the Oakland-East Bay (CA) chapter of PRSA, and chairman of Wong and Murray, Inc., said, "Accreditation for me means that I am able to represent a client as a professional practitioner. The process was one in which I had to affirm my knowledge of the profession, and evaluate myself and my knowledge against industry standards. Accreditation is extremely helpful in giving credibility to Public Relations and to myself as a reputable agency to clients."

Preparation for the career, along with intensive study, enable one to take the examination with confidence. The PRSA Study Guide states, however, "It is not advisable for even the most experienced practitioner to attempt the examinations without a systematic review both of his or her independent learning and of current literature and practice. No candidate should try to meet the challenges of these comprehensive and demanding examinations without advance preparation."

Chapters throughout the United States offer study sessions or a pre-Accreditation review course, designed to help the candidate gear up for the intensive examination. The Accreditation process has been compared to "passing the bar" or obtaining one's CPA.

Successful candidates, according to PRSA, invariably have certain things in common:

"1) preparatory study of suggested texts;

"2) thorough reading of the questions so that all parts are answered and time is not wasted answering questions not asked;

"3) answers that demonstrate knowledge of the broad field of public relations, and

"4) selection of questions appropriate to the candidates' background and experience, particularly in the second half of the written examination."

As the official study guide states, "Only the candidate can review his or her personal experience and evaluate how it bears on the solution of problems and the design of effective programs."

The actual examination involves both an oral and written portion on "the basic body of public relations knowledge and the ability to apply that knowledge in practice, on the ethical principles embodied in the Society's Code of Professional Standards, and on techniques and principles of allied disciplines that affect the practice of public relations."

"To qualify as a profession, rather than a vocation, a field of endeavor must be endemic to the human condition," wrote Patrick Jackson, APR, senior counsel of Jackson Jackson & Wagner, and co-chairman of the Future of Public Relations Committee of PRSA. "Lawyers are professionals because the need for government by law rather than by the mob affects every person. Doctors are professionals because everyone needs mental and physical health. Teachers are professionals because education is an essential part of all of our lives.

"Public relations fits this criterion of professionalism: It is devoted to the essential function of building and improving human relationships. As soon as there was Eve as well as Adam, there were relationships; in every society, no matter how small or primitive, public communication needs and problems inevitably emerge and must be resolved," he wrote in the *Public Relations Journal.*

But as Jackson stated, "We may know we can qualify as a profession, but does the rest of the world know this? The resounding answer is no" (October, 1988, p. 27).

"Fundamentally, public relations is today a profession," wrote Edward L. Bernays, APR, in *Experts In Action* (1989). "By definition, a profession is an art applied to a science, in which the public interest rather than pecuniary motivation is the primary objective. It has a literature of some 16,000 items, another criterion of a profession. It has its associations, where members may exchange principles, techniques, and methods. It has a code of ethics defined by its associations. And it has its educational facilities both in the United States and other parts of the world."

"But unfortunately in the United States, words have the stability of soap bubbles and Belgian lace unless they are defined by law. The two words 'public relations' are in the public domain. This is contrary to criteria of other professions. In other professions, they

are defined by law with economic sanctions for those who transgress. In the United States, on the other hand, anyone can call himself or herself a public relations practitioner and often does, with disadvantage to public and profession alike," he said.

Bernays sees licensure, much discussed and controversial as it is, as the answer. Some who disagree see the basic problem with licensure as the First Amendment, which guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press. The Constitution does not guarantee the right to practice medicine or law, but it does protect free speech. To attempt to license free speech, say some, would be unconstitutional. It simply wouldn't be possible to exclude some from the practice of public relations, because to do so would be to restrict their right of speech. To promote Accreditation, on the other hand, is what they suggest, so that passing the Accreditation examination and earning "APR" would be the equivalent of passing the Bar or earning the designation M.D. by passing medical board examinations.

One method of demonstrating professionalism is for practitioners to be accredited. In this, the Silver Anniversary year of the PRSA Accreditation, practitioners are increasingly aware of the importance of the credibility the letters "APR" can add. In *pr reporter's* annual survey of the profession, in 1986, professionalism was the prime issue to practitioners.

The right to use the designation "APR" is a public relations professional's individual achievement won by passing exhaustive written and oral examinations. In doing so, the member has met the only nationwide, uniform standards of Accreditation for public relations practice.

As of January 1, 1989, PRSA lists 3,642 members as having achieved APR status. Total PRSA membership is 14,728. Approximately 50% of all eligible PRSA members are Accredited, with approximately 800 taking the examination over the last two years, and a pass rate of an average of 69%. Those who do not pass may re-take the examination.

The Accreditation Board, consisting of 17 Accredited members of the Society, oversees the program and reports to the Board of Directors. PRSA staff administers the day-to-day operations and policy implementation. Once an option, PRSA now considers Accreditation a necessity. The ultimate goal of the 25-year-old Accreditation Program was for APR (Accredited in Public Relations) to achieve the recognition of the CPA or the CLU, becoming the hallmark of a professional.

Several groups within PRSA make APR a requirement for entrance. PRSA Assembly delegates and new members of the Counselors Academy must be accredited, and many chapters are now requiring APR of their officers, according to Dorothy McGuinness, Manager, Accreditation/Eligibility, PRSA, New York.

Prerequisite for the examination is five years' experience in the paid professional practice of public relations. Candidates for Accreditation must file applications directly with PRSA Headquarters, to be approved at least four weeks before the examinations.

PRSA chapters administer the examination twice a year, with a day-long written exam, preceded or followed by a one-hour oral.

Candidates receive the PRSA Accreditation Primer, written by Robert L. Kendall, Ph.D., APR; Bill Baxter, APR, and F. John Pessolano, APR. According to the authors of the Primer, "A typical pre-Accreditation seminar might consist of six-and-a-half hour sessions," covering "Ethics, Background and Basic Premises; Publics and Public Opinion, Public Relations Practice, Communications; Professional Public Relations and Public Relations Firms, and Process Review." Accreditation chairpersons review everything from Public Relations Law to the historical background, and Code of Professional Standards. Representative general textbooks are recommended to candidates for study, and an Accreditation preparation audio tape is available.

The candidates face a panel of three Accredited PRSA members for the oral examination, during which they respond to a series of structured questions. The written examination covers general public relations principles, knowledge of relevant social trends, legal issues and history, along with the PRSA Code of Professional Standards. Candidates must also demonstrate their ability to evaluate and to respond appropriately to public relations problems.

In taking the Accreditation examination, practitioners are taking a step toward demonstrating their own professionalism, and helping to raise the credibility of the profession. With more and more job listings indicating "APR preferred" among qualifications, the need for the three-letter designation is apparent.

John W. Felton, APR, Vice President, Corporate Communications, McCormick & Company, Inc., said, "APR after your name becomes a distinctive mark that signals demonstrated skills and proves worth--the hallmark of quality performance."

Ruby A. Miller, APR, Manager - Socioeconomic Programs, Martin Marietta Energy Systems, Inc., said, "In addition to the personal satisfaction I received from having passed a comprehensive examination that measured my knowledge, skills and analytical abilities in public relations, I feel Accreditation makes it easier for

those outside the field to view public relations as a 'profession' and not just a practice."

Jeannette E. Paladino, APR, Vice President/Group Manager, Cohn & Wolfe, said, "The APR signifies to a potential employer that a public relations professional has met the standards of quality for the field."

Nolte and Wilcox (1979) called the program the "closest approach to establishing public relations as a profession," adding, "Those who pass--and not all pass--are given a Certificate of Accreditation and the right to use behind their names the initials APR, which mean 'Accredited [in] Public Relations.' This program is growing, and more and more organizations are requiring accreditation as a qualification for advancement or even employment."

In the ten years since those authors assessed the Accreditation program of PRSA, the growth they mentioned has been dramatically demonstrated. And PRSA states, "As their numbers have risen, so too have the professional standards for the practice of public relations. This has resulted in increased public recognition and opportunities for professional advancement for Accredited practitioners." The designation APR, according to PRSA, signifies a high level of professional experience and competence. To be the best that one can be, one needs to climb this highest mountain.

Ray Artigue, APR, President, Evans/Artigue Public Relations, assessed the experience as, "In many ways, studying to become accredited was like earning a graduate degree..."

After two years of discussion, Jackson, in opening the discussion on professionalism as co-chairman of the Future of Public Relations Committee, told the National Assembly, "One strong theme that has come through member comments is that we need...individual professional development programs and to demonstrate that professionalism to others." By 1991, an amendment voted on by PRSA Assembly delegates last year "will make retention of accreditation contingent upon demonstrating continued professional progression." As explained in the PRSA Assembly Report, "Such demonstration could take the form of CEUs, college credits, home study, and/or writings, research, public service, and other professional activities. The amendment sets up a three-year cycle for meeting these requirements, with a one-year extension possible."

Ann H. Barkelew, APR, Vice President, Corporate Public Relations, Dayton Hudson Corporation, concluded, "It is so important for us as professionals to keep stretching and growing and learning. It also is important to be proud of what we are. APR says it all!"

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Nolte, L.W., Wilcox, D.L. (1979), Fundamentals of Public Relations: Professional Guidelines, Concepts and Integrations, 2nd edition, Pergamon Press:NY.

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PRSA Assembly Report, (Nov. 13, 1988).

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Wong Murray, R. (July 20, 1989) Telephone interview.

Please complete this form and mail to:

Public Relations Society of America
33 Irving Place
New York, NY 10003
Telephone: (212) 995-2230

☐ I am not a member of PRSA. Please send me an application to join and information on Accreditation.

☐ I am a member of PRSA. Please send me information on Accreditation.

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)

Name _____

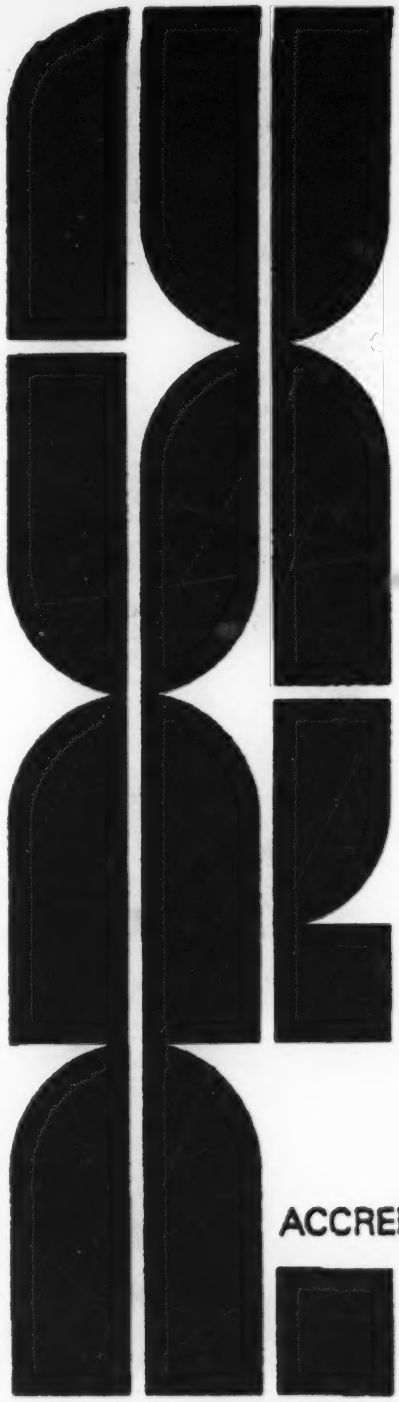
Title _____

Firm _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITATION EXAMINATION APPLICATION FOR PRSA MEMBERS

Public Relations Society of America

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS IN FULL. This application must be accompanied by a check for $175 to cover the Accreditation fee. The Accreditation fee shall be refunded only in the case of an applicant deemed ineligible to take the Accreditation examination. No refund will be made once the Accreditation examination is taken. Fee payable in U.S. funds only.

Member's Name: (Ms.) (Mr.) _____ Date: _____

STATEMENT BY APPLICANT

I am a **MEMBER** of the Public Relations Society of America and hereby apply for PRSA Accreditation. I attest to the fact that I have FIVE YEARS (60 MONTHS) OF EXPERIENCE in the paid professional practice of public relations or in the teaching or administration of public relations courses in an accredited college or university and that I am currently so engaged. I understand that I must successfully complete the examination to become Accredited.

Member's Signature _____

INFORMATION ON PRESENT POSITION

Organization: _____

Business Address: _____ Phone: _____
Street/P.O. Box — Area code

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Your Position or Title: _____

Length of Tenure With This Title: _____ To _____ Total Months _____
Month — Year — Month — Year

Immediate Supervisor: _____
Name — Title

Nature of Organization's Business or Activity: _____

(Continued)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Please indicate the approximate percentages of time you spent on the following functions applicable to your position: Percentages should add up to 100%.

___ Public Relations Management and Administration	___ Editing Publications	___ Employee Relations
___ Community Relations	___ Environmental Teaching	___ Special Events
___ Institutional/Corporate Advertising	___ Public Relations Teaching	___ Media Relations
___ Consumer Affairs	___ Financial Public Relations	___ Publicity
___ Government Relations	___ Public Relations Counseling	___ Other _____

Describe below your public relations responsibilities.

If you have not been in your present position for five years, please list your previous experience (giving months/years in each position) and describe your responsibilities there. Your public relations experience must total at least FIVE FULL YEARS.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

INFORMATION ON PRIOR POSITIONS

Organization: _____

Business Address: _____ (Street/P.O. Box) Phone: _____ (Area code)

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Your Position or Title: _____

Length of Tenure With This Title: _____ (Month / Year) To _____ (Month / Year) Total Months _____

Immediate Supervisor: _____ (Name / Title)

Nature of Organization's Business or Activity: _____

Please indicate the approximate percentages of time you spent on the following functions applicable to your position: Percentages should add up to 100%.

____ Public Relations Management and Administration	____ Editing Publications	____ Employee Relations
____ Community Relations	____ Environmental Teaching	____ Special Events
____ Institutional/Corporate Advertising	____ Public Relations Teaching	____ Media Relations
____ Consumer Affairs	____ Financial Public Relations	____ Publicity
____ Government Relations	____ Public Relations Counseling	____ Other _____

If your work did NOT include public relations functions, please check here ☐.
Otherwise, describe below your public relations responsibilities.

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INFORMATION ON PRIOR POSITIONS *(Cont.)*

Organization: _____

Business Address: _____ Phone: _____
Street/PO. Box — Area code

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Your Position or Title: _____

Length of Tenure With This Title: _____ To _____ Total Months _____
Month Year — Month Year

Immediate Supervisor: _____
Name — Title

Nature of Organization's Business or Activity: _____

Please indicate the approximate percentages of time you spend on the following functions applicable to your position: **Percentages should add up to 100%.**

___ Public Relations Management and Administration	___ Editing Publications	___ Employee Relations
___ Community Relations	___ Environmental Teaching	___ Special Events
___ Institutional/Corporate Advertising	___ Public Relations Teaching	___ Media Relations
___ Consumer Affairs	___ Financial Public Relations	___ Publicity
___ Government Relations	___ Public Relations Counseling	___ Other _____

If your work did NOT include public relations functions, please check here ☐.
Otherwise, describe below your public relations responsibilities.

_____

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_____

If further space is required, please list the information on a separate sheet and attach to this application.

THIS RECORD FOR PRSA USE ONLY

PRSA NATIONAL ELIGIBILITY BOARD RECORD

Action _____ Date _____ Signed: _____
Member, PRSA Eligibility Board

Action _____ Date _____ Signed: _____
Member, PRSA Eligibility Board

Received _____ Date _____

Please submit application, along with check for $175.00 to cover Accreditation fee, to PRSA Headquarters, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003. Fee payable in U.S. funds only.

For additional information, write to Manager, Accreditation/Eligibility, PRSA Headquarters.

Received _____ Date _____ APPROVAL DATE: _____

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